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News Release

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NEW TATTOO POLICY ALLOWS FOR MORE MILITARY BLOOD DONATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 28, 2008—The Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) has implemented a new policy regarding tattoos that may allow more donors to give blood to the military. This new policy, which went into effect Nov. 30, 2007, allows donors with new tattoos to give blood again after just one week, instead of the previous one-year deferral period; provided the tattoo was acquired in a state-regulated tattoo parlor. This new policy allows the ASBP to accept donations from more individuals wishing to contribute to the military's blood supply for combat areas and at home.

"Recent tattoos are one of the most common reasons people get temporarily deferred from donating," said Capt. Warren Brown, officer in charge at Fort Gordon's Kendrick Memorial Blood Center, Ga. "This will increase the size of our donor pool - every donor counts."

The AABB, formerly known as the American Association of Blood Banks, establishes standards for the American blood bank industry. These standards stipulate that for potential donors with tattoos to be considered under the new policy, they must have received their tattoo in state-regulated tattoo parlors. The states are not compelled at this time to regulate or license tattoo parlors. For those states that do, the regulations require the use of sterile needles and the one-time use of ink to ensure no risk of being exposed to blood-borne diseases like HIV or hepatitis from the needle or ink. Those potential donors who get tattooed in states not regulated according to AABB standards must wait one year before giving blood.

A total of 20 states regulate tattoo facilities and donors are encouraged to contact their nearest military blood donor center for more details. "Though many states are not on the approved list yet, the Armed Services Blood Program Office will review the policy on an

annual basis to ensure currency,” said Navy Cdr, Michael C. Libby, director of the Armed Services Blood Program Office.

To schedule a donation appointment or to contact your local blood donor center regarding the tattoo policy, please visit www.militaryblood.dod.mil .